

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the salient limitation of claim 6 and intervening claim 2. Thus, amended claim 1 is claim 6 in independent form. Claim 1 now defines the invention as a method for the manufacture of a roof liner, wherein a core layer having first and second sides is first provided. A reinforcement layer is applied on one of the first and second sides of the core layer. The core layer and the reinforcement layer form a sandwich having first and second sides. An energy absorption element, the core layer and the reinforcement layer are loaded into a moulding tool. The energy absorption element is joined to one of the core layer and the reinforcement layer during a moulding operation. A decorative layer is then applied on one of the first and second sides of the sandwich.

Contrary to the Examiner's assertion with respect to the rejection of claim 6, the Nagayama reference does not disclose the further step of applying a decorative layer on one of the first and second sides of the sandwich subsequently to a moulding operation. Instead, the Nagayama reference (see Figs. 19-21) simply discloses providing a pair of molds 5 and 6 with a shock absorbing body 16 inserted therein and then loading a skin 2 and a paper-made stampable sheet 10 between the molds. The molds 5 and 6 are clamped to a desired thickness to adhere and integrally unite the skin 2 and the sheet 10. As discussed at column 25, lines 27-28, after completion of the clamping the molds are cooled and opened to take out a product therefrom. There is no disclosure of applying a decorative layer on the joined skin 2 and sheet 10 subsequently to a moulding operation. Thus, the invention as defined by claim 1 is clearly patentable over the Nagayama reference.

With respect to new claim 27, it is noted that the Nagayama reference does not teach or suggest loading an energy absorption element, a core layer and a reinforcement layer into a hot press, wherein heat is added from the hot press during the moulding operation for joining the energy absorption element, the core layer and the reinforcement layer. Contrary, the Nagayama reference discloses pre-heating a sheet 10 in a far-infrared ray heating furnace. The sheet 10 is then subsequently loading into a pair of molds 5 and 6 along with a skin 2 and a shock absorbing body


16. As stated at column 24, lines 29-34 and column 25, lines 19-23, the shock absorbing body 16, the skin 2 and the sheet 10 are adhered and integrally united by the heat of the sheet 10 and the clamping pressure. After completing of the clamping, the molds are cooled and opened to take out a product therefrom, as stated at column 25 lines 27-28.

New claim 28 is previous claim 8 written in independent form. Claim 28 defines the invention as a method for the manufacture of a roof liner, wherein a core layer having first and second sides is first provided. A two-layered reinforcement layer is applied on one of the first and second sides of the core layer. An energy absorption element, the core layer and the two-layered reinforcement layer are loaded into a moulding tool. The energy absorption element is joined to one of the core layer and the reinforcement layer during a moulding operation. Contrary to the Examiner's assertion with respect to the rejection of claim 8, the Nagayama reference does not disclose a two-layered reinforcement layer. In the rejection of claim 8, the Examiner suggests that the foam layer of the skin constitutes the claimed core layer, and the stampable sheet or light weight stampable sheet (thermoplastic resin film) constitutes the claimed reinforcement layer. There is no disclosure in the Nagayama reference of a two-layered reinforcement layer loaded into a moulding tool with an energy absorption element and a core layer. Thus, the invention as defined by claim 28 is clearly patentable over the Nagayama reference.

New claim 29 defines the invention as a method for the manufacture of a roof liner by first providing a core layer including foam material and having first and second sides. A first two-layered reinforcement layer is applied on the first side of the core layer. A second two-layered reinforcement layer is applied on the second side of the core layer. An energy absorption element, the core layer and the first and second two-layered reinforcement layers are loaded into a moulding tool. The energy absorption element, the core layer and the first and second reinforcement layers are joined in a moulding operation such that the energy absorption element is disposed adjacent the first two-layered reinforcement layer. The energy absorption element, the core layer and the first and second two-layered reinforcement layers are removed from

the moulding tool. A decorative layer is applied on the second two-layered reinforcement layer after the energy absorption element, the core layer and the first and second two-layered reinforcement layers are removed from the moulding tool. There is no disclosure in the Nagayama reference of such a method. Thus, the invention as defined by claim 29 is clearly patentable over the Nagayama reference.

Respectfully submitted,



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